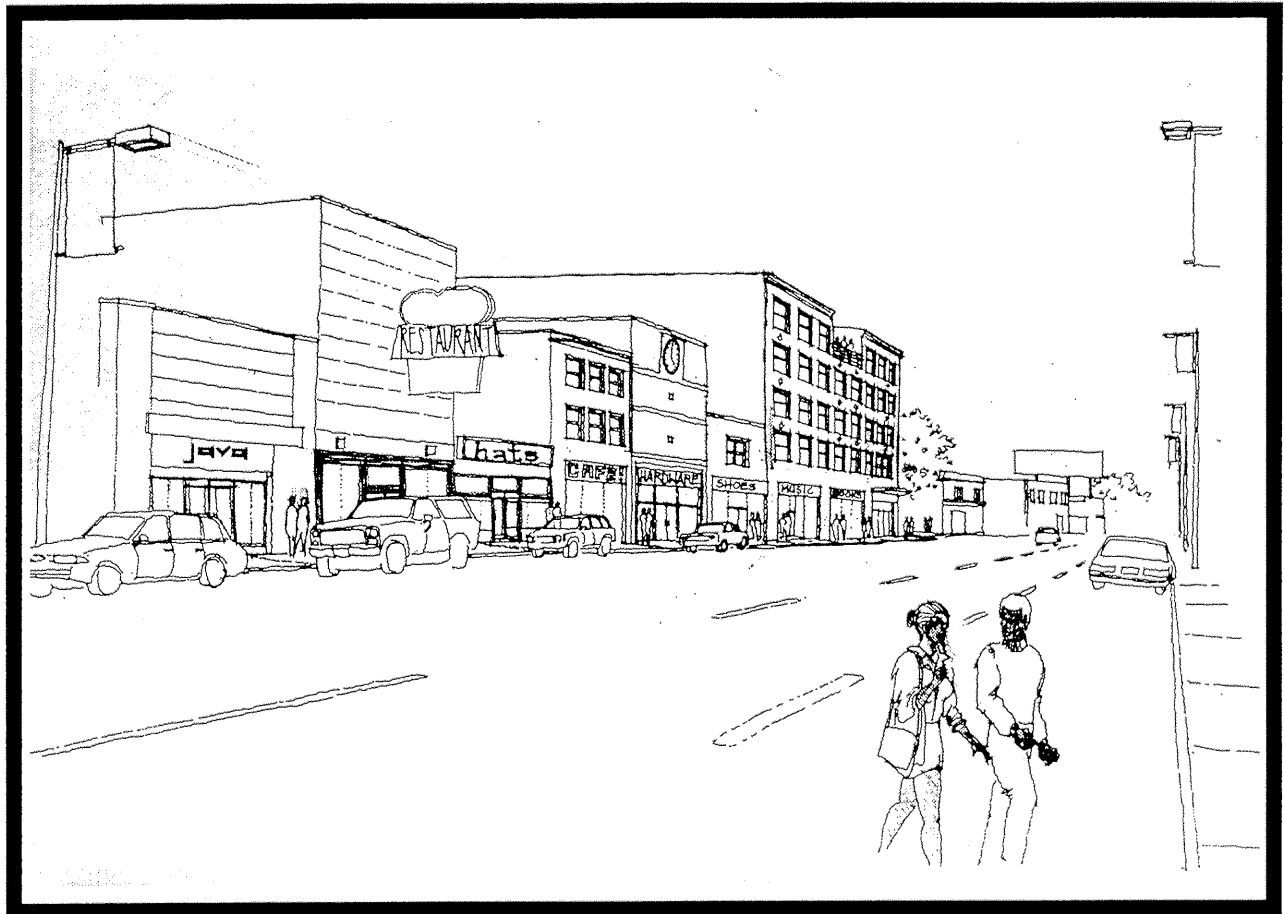


## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL



"I would like to see a wide variety of stores that are clean and friendly; where customer service is first."

Mrs. Mildred Kyles, Cluster Resident and  
Manager, North Central Neighborhood City Hall

## **Cluster 1's Vision for Neighborhood Commercial Is...**

*Throughout Cluster 1 residents have access to convenient retail /service stores that offer high quality, competitively priced goods. The commercial areas are reminiscent of traditional urban commercial areas with some commercial buildings having a mix of first floor retail uses with second floor residences. Much of the vacant surplus commercial land has been replaced by community parks and greenways and new institutional uses such as training facilities and multi-service centers. Many of the businesses are locally-owned and offer employment opportunities to cluster residents, while allowing money generated in the community to stay in the area by enabling residents to "Shop Detroit."*

### **Neighborhood Commercial Reinvestment Issues**

Strategies to address commercial development in the Cluster must consider three issues:

- ❖ Most of the retail needs of Cluster 1 residents are not met, thus sending dollars out of the community to the surrounding suburbs
- ❖ There is an overabundance of commercially-zoned land in the Cluster 1 and many commercial blocks have either no or few viable businesses remaining, which has led to businesses being too spread out in the Cluster
- ❖ There are a number of undesirable commercial businesses, including tow yards and adult-oriented businesses, located in Cluster 1.

### **Summary of Prioritized Land Use & Policy Neighborhood Commercial Reinvestment Recommendations**

1. Work with the community to develop site-specific plans to facilitate the redevelopment of surplus commercial land to other uses that better serve the needs of the Cluster, such as training centers and community greenways.
2. Use the Cluster 1 CRS report and other available materials to aggressively market the Cluster as an area that can support small neighborhood-based commercial centers located adjacent to neighborhoods.
3. Work with the community to develop a Cluster-wide rezoning plan that includes rezoning B-4 (General Business District) areas to B-2 (Local Business and Residential District) to prohibit undesirable commercial uses from locating in the Cluster.

4. Provide improved City services to businesses in the Cluster, through enhanced police patrols, road maintenance, street lighting and code enforcement.
5. Facilitate the creation of locally-owned businesses by streamlining the City's permit and inspections procedures, facilitating the sale of tax delinquent commercial properties in a way that assists Cluster entrepreneurs, establishing a local One Stop Capital Shop in the Cluster and providing entrepreneurship training and mentoring programs.
6. Facilitate the development of a large-scale commercial center at the southwest corner of the Conner-Gratiot intersection by making available for development the large City-owned parcel at the site.
7. Provide CDBG funds and other incentives to encourage the rehabilitation of existing commercial buildings along viable commercial corridors. The rehabilitation should highlight and visually unify unique elements of the cluster.
8. Aggressively enforce commercial building codes and work with the community to develop and implement commercial design standards.

## ***Detailed Description of Land Use/Physical Neighborhood*** **Commercial Reinvestment Priorities**

1. **The Planning and Development Department should work with the community to develop site-specific plans to facilitate the redevelopment of surplus commercial land to other uses that better serve the needs of the Cluster, such as training centers and community greenways.**

There is an overabundance of vacant commercially-zoned land in Cluster 1 that could better serve the community if it were designated for some other use. Residents want surplus commercial areas put to the following uses:

- ❖ Community "pocket" parks (small parks with few amenities) and community gardens
- ❖ Institutional facilities (training centers, multi-service centers)
- ❖ Greenways and bike paths connecting neighborhoods to each other and to the Detroit River

2. **Use the Cluster 1 CRS report and other available materials to aggressively market the Cluster as an area that can support small neighborhood-based commercial centers located adjacent to neighborhoods.**

New commercial development in Cluster 1 should focus on the construction of neighborhood-based commercial centers that meet the retail and service needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. The following issues should be considered when developments are proposed:

- ❖ Neighborhood-based commercial centers should be relatively small, 50,000 to 75,000 square feet, and should be located in areas scattered throughout the Cluster.

- ❖ New commercial development should take place in consolidated nodes of commercially-zoned land to free up surplus commercial land for other uses.
- ❖ The neighborhood commercial centers should be designed to promote pedestrian as well as vehicular access to stores.
- ❖ Some commercial areas should be zoned for mixed use development, so that residential units can be located above ground floor commercial uses.
- ❖ Buildings should meet commercial design standards that ensure that commercial buildings are relatively consistent in exterior appearance and signage.

While commercial nodes for neighborhood-scale centers should be designated *throughout* the Cluster, residents have identified the following sites as being the *highest priority* for this type of development:

- ❖ Along Seven Mile, primarily between Conant and I-75 (Neighborhood-based)
- ❖ John R between Nevada and State Fair (Mixed Use Neighborhood-based)
- ❖ McNichols between Dequindre and Conant (Neighborhood-based)

A variety of retail/service needs are currently unmet in the Cluster. However, the following types of businesses should be actively targeted for development in the Cluster:

- ❖ Sit down family restaurants
- ❖ Entertainment centers, including movie theater, arcades and miniature golf
- ❖ Business supply stores and copy centers
- ❖ Major grocery stores

3. **Facilitate the development of a large-scale commercial center at the southwest corner of the Conner-Gratiot intersection by making available for development the large City-owned parcel at the site.**

A number of developers have expressed an interest in developing a large-scale commercial center on this site. The 28 acre site is divided between two property owners:

- ❖ The former residential trailer park site is privately held and available for sale.
- ❖ The larger parcel is currently owned by the City of Detroit and is designated as the long-term parking lot for the City Airport. The lot has been unused for a number of years and the City Airport Authority has stated that it is actively looking for a replacement site.

The development should be at least 150,000 square feet, have a minimum of one national anchor tenant (e.g., Crowley's or Target) and provide comparison shopping opportunities. Conner Playfield, located on the eastern edge of the City-owned parcel, should remain a greenspace and be incorporated into a greenway running through the Cluster.

4. **Provide CDBG funds and other incentives to encourage the rehabilitation of existing commercial buildings along viable commercial corridors. The rehabilitation should highlight and visually unify unique elements of the cluster.**

A few areas in the Cluster have viable commercial areas that need to be updated to make the business corridor look more modern and to provide for consistent colors and signage. Two areas in the Cluster are targeted for rehabilitation:

- ❖ Seven Mile between Woodward and John R
- ❖ Van Dyke between Seven mile and Eight Mile

The commercial area along Seven Mile between Woodward and John R could be greatly improved by the use of design standards that highlight the ethnic qualities of the area, as has been done successfully in downtown Detroit's Greektown.

## ***Detailed Description of Policy/Programmatic Neighborhood Commercial Reinvestment Priorities***

1. **Work with the community to develop a Cluster-wide rezoning plan that includes rezoning B-4 (General Business District) areas to B-2 (Local Business and Residential District) to prohibit undesirable commercial uses from locating in the Cluster.**

A number of undesirable commercial uses exist in the Cluster. Residents want to rezone many commercial areas to ensure that these uses are not allowed to locate adjacent to residential neighborhoods. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance should also be amended so that only businesses that primarily serve the surrounding neighborhoods be allowed "by right" in areas zoned B-2. Residents identified a number of recent zoning amendments that have increased the uses allowed "by right" in B-2 areas and have blurred the distinction between B-2 and B-4 zoned areas.

Commercial areas along the following arterials should be rezoned from B-4 (General Business District) to B-2 (Local Business and Residential District):

- ❖ Seven Mile from I-75 to the eastern edge of the Cluster
- ❖ McNichols
- ❖ Nevada between Fenelon and Van Dyke
- ❖ John R
- ❖ Conant

Cluster 1 has a number of undesirable commercial uses and residents feel that their community has been unfairly targeted as an area where undesirable uses are allowed to locate. The following types of businesses should not be allowed to locate in the Cluster:

- ❖ Tow and car yard businesses
- ❖ Adult-oriented businesses
- ❖ Party stores
- ❖ Liquor stores
- ❖ Wig and beauty shops
- ❖ Fast food and Coney Island restaurants

2. **Provide improved City services to businesses in the Cluster, through enhanced police patrols, road maintenance, street lighting and code enforcement.**
3. **Facilitate the creation of locally-owned businesses.**

The City should:

- ❖ Streamline the City's permit, license and inspection procedures
- ❖ Facilitate the sale of tax delinquent commercial properties in a way that assists Cluster entrepreneurs
- ❖ Establish a local One Stop Capital Shop in the Cluster and work with the Small Business Administration and local financial institutions to provide financing for new business start-ups
- ❖ Facilitate the creation of entrepreneurship training and mentoring programs in the Cluster

If small locally-owned businesses are to flourish in the Cluster, the City must streamline its permitting and licensing requirements and reduce the length of time it takes for inspections to be completed. Many residents would like to patronize locally-owned businesses, but many potential entrepreneurs, even those with financing in place, find it almost impossible to open a business in the Cluster, due to City bureaucracy. The City should also facilitate the development of programs like that offered by the Detroit Entrepreneurship Institute in the Cluster. The community would like to work with the City should work with local financial institutions and the Small Business Administration to reduce barriers to financing for small start-up businesses.

4. **Aggressively enforce commercial building codes and work with the community to develop and implement commercial design standards.**

Many Cluster businesses appear run down. The City must aggressively enforce commercial building codes to ensure that the appearance of existing commercial buildings does not discourage new businesses from locating in the Cluster. The City should also develop and implement commercial design standards so that businesses will look more uniform and have consistent color and signage schemes.